

Maryland Historical Trust State Historic Sites Inventory Form

Survey No. BA-93
Magi No. 0300935308

DOE ☐ yes ☒ no

1. Name (indicate preferred name)

historic Jessop's Methodist Episcopal Church & Cemetery

and/or common Jessop's United Methodist Church

2. Location

street & number 14019 York Road ☐ not for publication

city, town Hunt Valley ☐ vicinity of Councilmanic District No. 3
congressional district 2nd

state Maryland county Baltimore County

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture <input type="checkbox"/> museum
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial <input type="checkbox"/> park
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational <input type="checkbox"/> private residence
<input type="checkbox"/> site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> religious
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government <input type="checkbox"/> scientific
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial <input type="checkbox"/> transportation
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> not applicable	<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> other: Cemetery

4. Owner of Property (give names and mailing addresses of all owners)

name Trustees of Jessop's M.E. Church, c/o Epworth U.M. Church, c/o Ms. Judith Grey

street & number 600 Warren Road telephone no.: 357-8251

city, town Cockeysville state and zip code Maryland 21030

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Hall of Records liber WG 114

street & number 350 Rowe Boulevard folio 344

city, town Annapolis state Maryland 21401

6. Representation in Existing Historical Surveys

title Maryland Historical Trust Inventory

date 1965 ☐ federal ☒ state ☒ county ☐ local

depository for survey records Maryland Historical Trust 100 Community Place

city, town Crownsville state Maryland 21032

Condition

☒ excellent
☐ good
☐ fair

☐ deteriorated
☐ ruins
☐ unexposed

Check one

☐ unaltered
☐ altered

Check one

☒ original site
☐ moved date of move _____

Prepare both a summary paragraph and a general description of the resource and its various elements as it exists today.

Jessop's Church is a building of frame and stone set in a park-like cemetery on top of a hill above that stretch of York Road, the old turnpike route, called Fifteen Mile Hill. Geological survey maps show that this height is a major feature as the land rises from the tidewater and out of the Great Gunpowder and Western Run valleys.

The church is a rectangular stone structure with a very steeply pitched roof that is topped by an open belfrey and broken by two steeply sloping shed-roofed dormers on each side. The steepness of the roof produces a large gable end above the vestibule and its two entrance doors. The gable peak is broken by a nine-part square window with multi-colored glass panes. Over the window, a small section of pent roofing cuts the gable peak into two triangles. The gable peak infill consists of fish-scale shingling. The rectangular windows are part clear glass, part a trim of colored panes. There are three bays of such windows along the main sides. Inside the church is a large, mostly clear and open space with some mahogany oak truss work in Gothic style supporting the underside of the roof. The walls are plain, decorated with a minimum of frescoed lines.

The church is a remarkable example of 1886-87, Shingle Style design adapted to an existing stone foundation that had probably been fitted with a gable roof of ordinary pitch. The rich stone work contrasts with the brightly painted surfaces of the eaves, window frames, and shingling.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

Registration Form: include in this title block the
property name, county, and site/inventory number

Multiple Property Documentation Form: include the
name of the multiple property listing

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Jessop's United Methodist Church
BA-93

Section number 7 Page 2



The 1886-1887 Shingle Style configuration of
Jessop's M. E. Church of 1811 (from 1984 pamphlet).

8. Significance

Survey No. BA-93

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400–1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500–1599	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600–1699	<input type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700–1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800–1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900–	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)

Specific dates 1811 & 1886–1887 **Builder/Architect** Benjamin Buck Owens (AIA, 1873)

check: Applicable Criteria: ☐ A ☐ B ☐ C ☐ D
and/or

Applicable Exception: ☐ A ☐ B ☐ C ☐ D ☐ E ☐ F ☐ G

Level of Significance: ☐ national ☐ state ☐ local

Prepare both a summary paragraph of significance and a general statement of history and support.

Jessop's United Methodist Church dates its origin to the year 1809 when the congregation met in the homes of its founding members. Then in 1811, John Gorsuch, Jr., on the first day of March, conveyed a hilltop location to the original trustees for one dollar. (1)

The first trustees were Charles Jessop, Charles Gorsuch, John Hatton, Phillip Lettig, Robert Fisher, Samuel Willis, and John Watts. The deed from Gorsuch specified that the purpose of the donation was "for the uses and purposes of erecting thereon a house or houses for the accommodation of a school and teachers thereof, and also for the use and benefit of the society of Christians commonly known by the name of the Methodist Episcopal Church of the United States of America, according to the rules and discipline, which from time to time, may be agreed upon by the ministers and preachers of the said church or society of Christians at their general conference in the United States of America, and that such ministers and preachers belonging to the said church or society, and none others, shall be permitted to preach and expound God's Holy Word therein." (2)

The tract name of the church site was "Round-a-bout," which seemed to serve as a placename along with the steep curved ascent to the site, Fifteen Mile Hill. Charles Jessop was one of the contractors for building the turnpike version of the road to York in 1809 and was familiar with the terrain.

It was customary to name chapels for the person or family that bore most of the expenses and no doubt Charles Jessop with his wealth and skills was responsible for carrying out the project. Jessop had been an iron master, a road contractor, bridge builder, farmer, and mill operator. He owned the Beaver Dam Mill (later called Shipley's) and another mill during his career. At the time of building the chapel, he lived at a great house on Paper Mill Road called "Vauxhall" that was eventually condemned to develop the Loch Raven

**Maryland Historical Trust/
ational Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

BA-93
MHT Inventory No.

name of property:

Section number 8 Page 2

Jessop's M. E. Church

watershed. Jessop kept a farm ledger where he recorded some of his business transactions and also social notes on births and deaths in the vicinity; he also wrote a few paragraphs of autobiography, where he noted that in his youth he had drank to excess, used profane language, and engaged in brawls and wrestling matches, not the sort with established sporting rules. Jessop's spelling is difficult to unravel but he expressed himself well. (3)

The 1959 parish history reports that the original church was rectangular, built of stone, about sixty feet in length, forty feet in width, perfectly plain with low ridged roof, and a series of windows along its east and west walls and with small entrance doors at the south end. It was heated by stones, lighted by oil lamps, and "was comfortable and commodious for the congregation that attended services of worship there." (4)

Charles Jessop lived from November 6, 1759 to April 2, 1828; his wife, Mary Gorsuch Jessop lived from August 29, 1767, to August 29, 1832. (5)

The church historian speculates that the building doubled as a Sunday School, which had been called for in the original deed. Still further remodeling took place in 1854. The structural history of this period, the original church project and the remodeling are extremely shadowy and there is nothing to quote from primary sources. (6)

If the 1811 church was as plain as early Americans could make it, the third phase of construction resulted in a remarkable work of art in the popular Shingle Style that was sweeping the Gilded Age. The local weekly reported in late October of 1886 that the Jessop congregation was meeting above Wright's Store at Shawan Road and York Road during the reconstruction; they had just been offered the use of the Ashland Presbyterian Church. Wright's Store was the one later operated by the Aiken and Pinkner families and then saw its final use as a camping supply shop, being demolished August 4, 1988. (7)

Maryland Historical Trust/
National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

BA-93
MHT Inventory No.

name of property:

Section number 8 Page 3

Jessop's M. E. Church

The last week of October in 1886, the Towson weekly gave a detailed account of the rebuilding process, which clearly shows that the walls of 1811 or of 1854 (or both) were incorporated into the handsome building that survives 106 years later:

Philopolis, 8th District. -- improvement of Jessop's Church is progressing ... The improved edifice will be about 40 feet in height with a large belfry. A vestibule will be added, 9 feet in width and 30 feet long with arched doorways on the right angle corners. The walls are raised 3 feet and the interior stripped and replastered. The interior will be open to the rafters, which will be finished in diagonal panels. There will be four dormer windows in the roof, two on either side -- The gallery will be removed and the roof will be covered with slate. The gable ends will be shingled instead of stone, as formerly. The whole cost will reach about \$3,000 (8)

The reopened Jessop's held its first service on May 29, 1887, with Bishop Andrews preaching the morning sermon. The afternoon sermon was preached by the Rev. A. J. (or W. J.) Gill. One Towson paper reported:

The repairs to the church cost about \$3,800, most of which has been collected leaving but a very small amount unpaid. The larger portion of the collection taken at night was donated by Mr. Edw. Austen, who is a member of the Baptist Church. (9)

The other Towson paper's Philopolis correspondent reported in much more detail and tied the project to a notable city architect and member of the AIA:

Jessop's M. E. Church, which has undergone improvements by raising its side walls about three feet, extending the roof to a height of forty feet, on which there is a belfry of more than twenty feet, in which was placed a bell weighing 800 pounds, also by the addition of a vestibule nine feet wide and enlarging the windows by placing transoms over them, the exterior repainted and penciled, new pulpit, new pews, and new carpeting, neatly and beautifully frescoed and the windows all replaced with pretty colored glass, was reopened on Sunday last with interesting services

**Maryland Historical Trust/
National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

BA-93
MHT Inventory No.

name of property:

Section number 8 Page 4

Jessop's M. E. Church

Those prominent in its erection &c., were Mr. Joseph S. Underwood, contractor, Messrs. Diven, Schultz, and Smith, masons, Mr. John E. Diven, painter; Mr. William George, frescoes; Mr. B. B. Owen [sic], architect. Messrs. Murphy & Gernhardt furnished the glass, Messrs. Joseph Thomas & Son the furniture, and Crone Bros. the carpeting. The organ was from Sanders & Stayman.

The congregation is surely well repaid for their efforts in making the improvement and have done no more than what the spot or beautiful elevation where the church stands is worthy of. They are greatly indebted to all who have given them encouragement and financial aid. (10)

The Philopolis correspondent also noted that the pulpit chair had not been delivered in time for the reopening. Lime for the project had been donated by the firm of Shipley & Parks, Texas, Md.

The congregation celebrated the centennial of the first homes meetings on December 4, 1909. The 150th anniversary was celebrated with a homecoming service on September 20, 1959. That year, a well printed parish history was published with the portraits of Charles and Mary Gorsuch Jessop. Much of the same material was reused in the 175th anniversary booklet for the services held on September 9, 1984. (11) Now Jessop's is only used for occasional services but the building is intact, the cemetery well cared for, the splendid church a combination of 1811 foundation walls and 1886 exuberant timber construction, crowning one of the most scenic hilltops in the county.

NOTES:

1. Anonymous, Jessop's Methodist Church (Sparks, Md., 1959), n.p.
2. Baltimore County Deeds, WG 114:344, Hall of Records, Annapolis.
3. Charles Jessop, "Prose From a Farm Ledger," History Trails, 11 (Autumn, 1976).
4. Anonymous, 1959, n.p.
5. Ibid.
6. Ibid.

Maryland Historical Trust/
National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

BA-93
MHT Inventory No.

name of property:

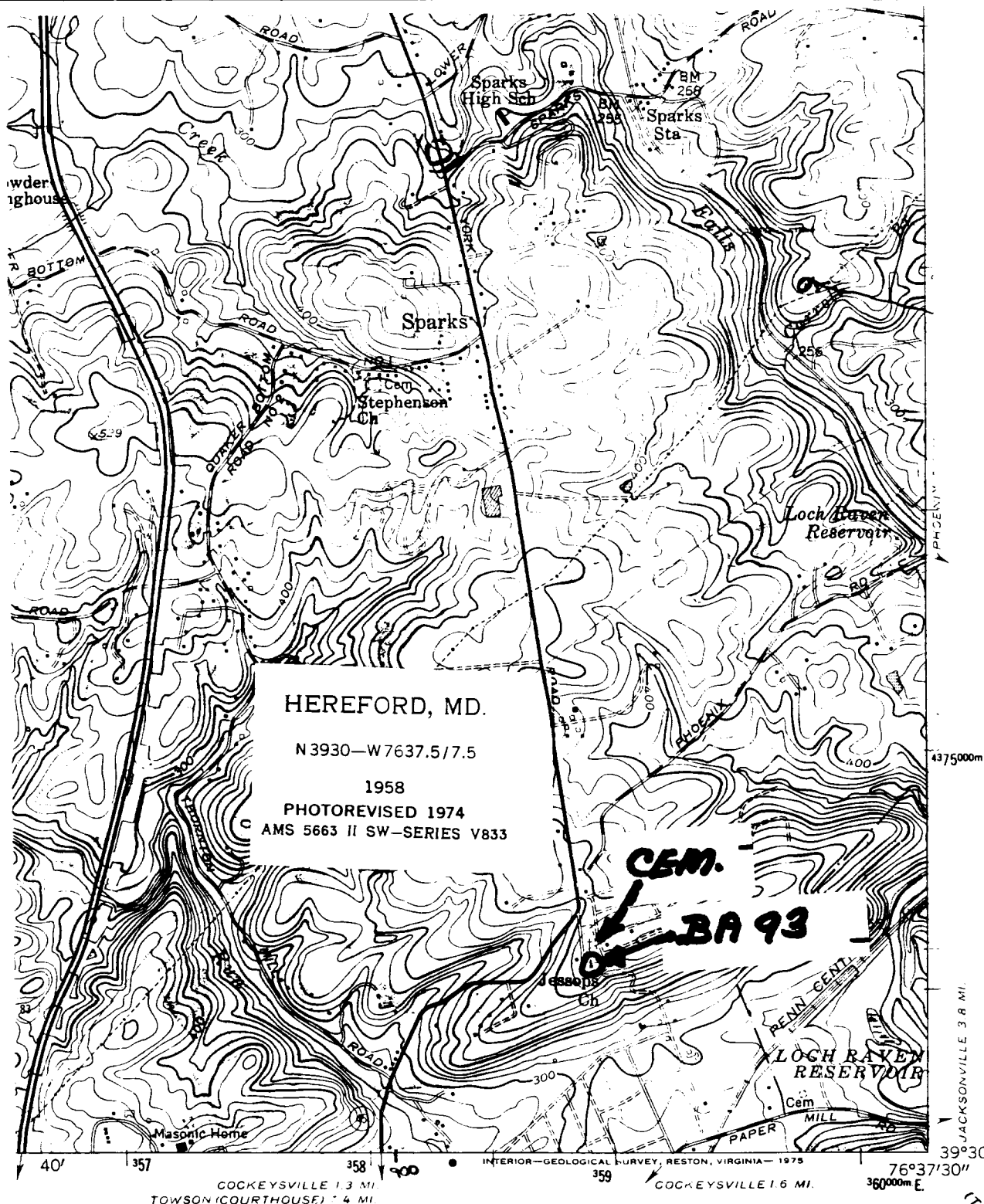
Section number 8 Page 5

Jessop's M. E. Church

7. Baltimore County Union, Towsontown, October 23, 1886.
8. Baltimore County Union, Towsontown, October 30, 1886.
9. Maryland Journal, Towsontown, June 4, 1887.
10. Baltimore County Union, Towsontown, June 4, 1887.
11. Anonymous, Jessop's Methodist Church, Founded 1809
(Cockeysville, 1984).

Multiple Property Documentation Form: include the name of the multiple property listing

Jessop's M.E. Church & Cemetery
BA-93

Section number 8 Page 5

9. Major Bibliographical References

Survey No. BA-93

Anonymous, Jessop's Methodist Church, Sparks, Maryland (Sparks, 1959)."Philopolis, 8th District," Baltimore County Union, October 30, 1886.

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property 4.0Quadrangle name HerefordQuadrangle scale 1:24,000

UTM References do NOT complete UTM references

A

Zone	Easting				Northing				

B

Zone	Easting				Northing				

C

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

D

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

E

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

F

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

G

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

H

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

Verbal boundary description and justification

See Tax Map 42, Parcel P 48.

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state	N/A	code	county	N/A	code
-------	-----	------	--------	-----	------

state	N/A	code	county	N/A	code
-------	-----	------	--------	-----	------

11. Form Prepared By

name/title John McGrainorganization Office of Planningdate October 6, 1992street & number 401 Bosley Avenuetelephone 410-887-3495city or town Towsonstate Maryland 21204

The Maryland Historic Sites Inventory was officially created by an Act of the Maryland Legislature to be found in the Annotated Code of Maryland, Article 41, Section 181 KA, 1974 supplement.

The survey and inventory are being prepared for information and record purposes only and do not constitute any infringement of individual property rights.

return to: Maryland Historical Trust
Shaw House
21 State Circle
Annapolis, Maryland 21401
(301) 269-2438

Maryland
Baltimore County
District VIII
York Road

BA-93

Jessop Methodist
Episcopal Church

0300934308

1811

On one acre of ground donated by Charles Jessop, when he acquired Vauxhall Estate. One of the oldest Methodist Church Buildings in the County; located on a hill overlooking Jessop Valley.

(First HABS Report)
E. Frances Offutt
HABS COMMITTEE OF BALTIMORE
COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

July 29, 1965